

Stewardship Moments-

Rev. Rick Fisher

Luke 16:13: *“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

What we do with our money is an indication of whose kingdom we are committed to in life – the temporary kingdom of self, or the eternal Kingdom of God. The financial resources God has entrusted into the Christian’s life are a **tool** for God’s Kingdom to come on earth, they are a **test** of our commitment to God and His purposes, and they are a **trademark** to show who we belong to. As we choose to serve God with our money, we become partners in the eternal harvest of souls into His forever family. Philip Yancey said, “I wish I did not have to think about money at all. But, I must come to terms with the Bible’s very strong statement about money”. And so must each of us who use the name Christian.

Prayer: *God, help each of us to take a look at whose kingdom is getting the first and best of the financial resources You have placed in our lives. And help us to do whatever it takes to give your Kingdom priority in our lives every day. Amen.*

Mark 12:30: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”*

The central focus and goal of being a Christian is to know that God loves us and then to choose to love Him back by opening our lives to Jesus Christ as our Savior. Then, we are to walk with God as the leader on all areas of our lives. One of the most important ways we demonstrate the control of Jesus in our lives is how we handle our possessions. By what we do with our money, God is able to measure our **love** for Him and our **faithfulness** to His Kingdom coming into this world. Our use of possessions demonstrates in a material way where we are in our spiritual lives. It is only out of a personal and daily love relationship with God that we come to be stewards of time, talent and treasure in a manner that honors God and brings blessings to others.

Prayer: *Father, I want to love you with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength. I want You to be in control of every area of my life, especially the money you have entrusted to me. Help me with the priorities of my life so that my love for you shines through in all that I do and all that I give. Amen.*

Luke 16:11-12: *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”*

Suppose that tomorrow morning you go to your local bank to make a withdrawal. Upon presenting your request, the teller informs you that your request cannot be honored, the bank has used your money in your account for other purposes and your balance is zero. I’m sure you would be shocked, disappointed and even angry. You had entrusted the care of your money to the bank and they had proved to be untrustworthy. With God, all of the possessions He places into our lives are a **trust**, given to us to manage and use in ways that bring glory to Him and advance His Kingdom on earth. And He watches to see what we do with the things He has deposited into our lives – time, talent and treasure. By returning to God what He has invested into our lives, we have the opportunity to participate in the blessings of heaven here on earth, to turn what is **temporary** into that which is **eternal**.

Prayer: *God, help us to have your perspective on the time, talent and treasure of our lives. Help us to see them as a deposit, a trust from You and in our giving today, let us honor You as we prove to be worthy of Your trust. Amen.*

Matthew 6: 19-21: *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

(Use a cut-out paper heart and a one dollar bill) Everyday we confront a “me” society, with its abundance of toys and opportunities for investing our money in things that are temporary, susceptible to decay and aging. Soon, the new toys of today become the garage sale items of tomorrow. But Jesus encourages us to be careful that we don’t get so caught up in temporary things that we miss the incredible opportunity to use the things we have been given to store up eternal treasures in heaven, to leverage for our future. We have the incredible opportunity to turn what is temporary into something that will last forever – the Kingdom of God. One of the ways we do this is with our tithes and offerings. (Hold up the heart and the dollar) And Jesus gave us a clear and simple picture – if you want to know where this (heart) is, then look where this (dollar) is going. One of the reasons that we must be faithful in our giving to the work of the ministry and mission of the church is because of what is at stake, our hearts.

Prayer: *Father, help us today to realize what is really at stake when we decide what to do with our material possessions, especially our money. Help us to see our hearts the way you see them. And enable us, by your power, to make investments in something that will last forever as we give these tithes and offerings to You. Amen.*

II Corinthians 9:7: *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

John Wesley was a cheerful giver. The founder of the Methodist Church, Wesley was well-known as a preacher, pastor and university professor. Yet, perhaps his greatest gift was his commitment to give tithes and offerings. As his income rose from the sale of books and his many preaching engagements, Wesley choose to keep the same standard of living, committed to living on the same amount of money each year. He believed that with increasing income, what should rise was not the Christian’s standard of living, but the standard of giving. His teaching on money set forth simple guidelines: **Gain** all you can by honest means, **Save** all you can by not gratifying the desires of the flesh or personal pride and **Give** all you can, beginning with the tithe, recognizing that all the Christian’s money belongs to God.

Prayer: *Father, we acknowledge today that all of our material blessings are from you and that all of our material possessions are really yours. Help us to be set free from the bonds of money, free to give with joy, that your Kingdom might come in this community and around the world. Amen*

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